



Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities

FROM: Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities

TO : **Austin City Council**

SUBJECT : Support for Visitability Requirements in City Residential Building Code

DATE : May 20, 2008

SIGNED :

On May 15, 2008 at our regular monthly meeting, the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities unanimously voted for a resolution of support to include five core visitability standards in the City of Austin Residential Building Code and Electrical Code for all new construction of single-family homes and duplexes. These proposed changes to the City's Residential Building Code would result in an overall greater number of visitable homes in our community, allowing citizens to maintain access to their homes in the event of injury or disability.

As our population ages, visitable homes will permit citizens to more easily age in their homes, reducing their risk of future long-term institutional care. Although we understand that visitable homes are not necessarily fully accessible homes, these homes may be much more easily converted to meet future accessibility needs.

The additional cost to construct new homes to visitability standards is estimated by City staff to be \$300 - \$500. Most home buyers will not notice any significant increase in the financing of a visitable home or any apparent changes to the design of these new homes. However, for most homeowners, these Visitability features may one day become apparent when they are needed to accommodate the needs of a family member experiencing short-term or long-term disability.

Ultimately, the inclusion of five core Visitability standards in all new single family residential construction will make it possible for neighbors to visit neighbors regardless of disability, resulting in greater over-all inclusion of people with disabilities in the social life of Austin.

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